

THE  
SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE

WITH

REGARD TO SLAVERY.

BY A CLERGYMAN

OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

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# THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE WITH REGARD TO SLAVERY.

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## IS SLAVERY A SIN ?

*Answer :*

THE BIBLE TEACHES DUTIES CONCERNING IT, BUT NOWHERE INTIMATES ITS SINFULNESS.

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PROPOSITION :—*The Word of God countenances Slavery.*

### I. This appears from the Old Testament.

Abraham, bought with his money, Gen. xxiv. 35. Born in his house, xvii. 23, 27. A royal present, xx. 14.

Isaac, by inheritance, Gen. xx. 4, xxiv. 36, xxv. 5, 6. By increase, xxvi. 19, 13, 14.

(a) Examples. Jacob, by earning and increase, Gen. xxx. 29, 30, 43, also xxxii. 5 to 23.

Job, his degradation shown, i. iii. (Heb. servants.) His bond slave would not answer, xix. 16, xxxi. 13.

(b) The Decalogue Recognizes *bond servants* amongst possessions, Ex. xx. 17, Deut. v. 21.

{ 1 Hebrews might be sold, if poor and in debt, Lev. xxv. 39, Neh. v. 5, and Ex. xxi. 7, 2d Kings, iv. 1, Matt. xviii. 25. For theft, Exodus xxii. 3.

To a Hebrew neighbor, only for six years, Exodus xxi. 2, Deut. xv. 9, 12, 18.

But never longer *against* his will, (same references,) and Jer. xxxiv. 14, (illegal retention.)

But if servant *liked*, he might serve his master perpetually, Exodus xxi. 5, 6, Deut. xv. 16, 17.

2 Yet all Hebrew servants must return to their own inheritance, at the Jubilee, Lev. xxv. 10, 13, 17, 40, 41.

3 Children of married slaves belonged to their mother's owner, Ex. xxi. 3, 4.

{ "Home born," Jer. ii. 14.  
"Children of handmaids," Psalms, lxxxviii. 16, cxvi. 16.  
"Born in the house," Gen. xiv. 14, xv. 3, xvii. 23, xxi. 10.

(c) Laws regulating Slavery.

(e) Continued

- { 4 Hebrews might *buy* of other races of people bond-servants, Lev. xxv. 44, 45.  
 4' And own them, Ex. xxi. 20, "He is his money."  
 4" For a possession, Lev. xxv. 45.  
 4"" Without any limitation of time, Lev. xxv. 46.  
 4"" And transmit such bond-servants as an inheritance to their children from generation to generation, Lev. xxv. 46.

(d) Commendations Of faithful servants, Prov. xiv. 3, 5, xvii. 2, xxvii. 18.

## II. This appears from the New Testament.

A General }  
 B Especial } Considerations.

### A, GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.

#### *Negative Argument.*

- (a) There is no intimation of its sinfulness either by  
 1st, John the Baptist,
- 1 It was his especial office to teach reformation in every thing necessary to prepare men for the more exalted precepts and perfect obedience of the gospel, Matt. iii. 3, Mark i. 2, 3, John i. 2. 3.  
 1' And a thorough reformation, "axe at the root," "thoroughly purge," &c., not a compromising reformer.
- 2 Such an inspired reformer must encounter fierce opposition, Matt. iii. 7, 9, and Luke iii. 19, compared with Luke vii. 30.
- 3 And it was his well known mission to suffer for his boldness in speaking the truth, Luke iii. 19, &c. (Hence he could have no motive whatever for withholding the truth.)
- 4 Slavery was then universal in the world, (see profane history at that age,) and if it had been a sin of the world or an institution only tolerated in the Jewish polity, it must have been (sec. 1 supra) one of the chief objects of his mission, to denounce it.
- 5 But he never utters a word against it, (which, if it were a sin at all, from its universality, was the crying sin of the world.)  
 He teaches all classes of persons, Luke iii. 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, &c., &c.
- 6 But not a word of the duty of manumission, or the sinfulness of holding.
- 7 It was not fear, that kept him silent. (John was the reprobate of Herod, Luke iii. 19.)  
 7' Nor motives of policy, (sec. 1 and 1 supra, and 2 and 3.)  
 7" Nor ignorance. He was filled with the Holy Ghost from the womb, Luke i. 15.  
 And the greatest prophet that ever lived, Luke vii. 28.

2d, Our Lord, Directly in any discourse or sayings. Indirectly in discourses, *parables or miracles.*

- 3d, Or His Apostles.
- 1 They were filled with the Holy Ghost, Acts ii. 4, vi. 31.
- 2 Which by the Saviour's promise should guide them *into all truth*, John xvi. 13.
- 3 Yet they (illumined by the Holy Ghost) did not know that Slavery was a sin.
- 4 Or, knowing,—failed to declare it.

### *Incidental Argument.*

- Scriptural History. 1 Slavery was not abrogated in any Church of Apostolic planting.  
 Extra Scriptural. 2 It has never been abrogated by the Church of Christ since Apostolic days.
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So much for the negative argument from the New Testament; and if the Scriptures went no further, the negative argument from the New Testament, following the positive from the Old, would be perfectly unanswerable in favor of our proposition.

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For, if Slavery were a sin, (it being so universal,) the Apostle's silence can only be accounted for by "*fear*" or "*motives of policy*." The first of these suggestions is absurd, the second simple.

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*They well foreknew*, that they "were appointed unto death" for the testimony of Jesus, 1 Cor. iv. 9, John xxi. 18, 19, Lev. xxi. 12, 16, John xvi. 2, Luke xxi. 17, Acts ix. 16, and xx. 23, and many more.

*It was not fear.* Hence they well knew, that the with-holding of any truth could help them nothing, nor the boldest denunciation of any sin increase their perils or their sufferings. Therefore they had no ground of fear. And they did not fear, Acts xx. 24.

One instance of weakness is recorded, Acts xv. 38. But it was fully atoned for by subsequent zeal and fidelity, 2 Tim. iv. 11.

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Hence it was not fear, that kept the Apostles silent. The absurdity of the suggestion disproves it.

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Some moderns argue (see the summary in Rees' Encyclopedia, Slave Trade,) that not to offend the prejudices of so large a part of mankind, and drive them altogether from the gospel, they declined preaching against slavery, trusting to the good sense and good feelings of the world—so to speak—to remove it in its own time. In other words, the Apostles found in the world, ONE SIN TOO MIGHTY for the power of God to contend with.

Nor Policy.

The Spirit of God in the Apostles, the very men whom God had inspired to accomplish his own work, finding the world and the devil too strong on *one* point, silently yielded that point to the world and the devil. And thus the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth, compromised with a sin instead of combatting it.

And thus it was left to the world, influenced by the devil, to remove from the world a sin, which God's chosen Apostles—inspired by the Holy Ghost—were unable to keep out from the Church of Christ.

The impiety of this inevitable conclusion is a sufficient refutation of the premises from which it is drawn.

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Hence neither fear nor motives of policy caused their silence.

## B, ESPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS.

### *Positive Teaching.*

- (a) Masters.
- 1 Fully instructed in their duties, Eph. vi. 9, Col. iv. 1, but holding slaves not declared to be wrong, nor manumission a duty.
  - 2 A fugitive slave, becoming Christianized, is sent back to his Christian master, who is entreated *to receive him again into favor without punishment*. *On the ground* of the master's regard for St. Paul, the slave's devoted attention to the Apostle, his penitence and repentance, evinced by *his return to his master*, and the promise of future excellence, developed in him by his conversion.
  - 2' The Apostle gently intimates the great obligation of the master to him as his spiritual father, but nothing of the *sinfulness of holding or duty of manumission*. Epistle to Philemon.

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- (b) Servants.
- 1 To give themselves no concern on account of the state of bondage, but therein cheerfully to abide unless it be their master's pleasure to free them, 1 Cor. vii. 20, 24.
  - 2 Warned against the besetting vices of slaves, { Eye Service, Eph. vi. 6, Col. iii. 22.  
Purloining, Titus ii. 9, 10.  
Answering again, Titus ii. 9, 10.  
Attentively obedient, Eph. vi. 5, in all things, Col. iii. 22.  
Perfect openness of heart, Eph. vi. 5, Col. iii. 22.
  - 3 Taught perfect obedience, { Working from the soul, " " 6, Col. iii. 23.  
With good will, Eph. vi. 7.  
Well pleasing in everything, Titus ii. 9.  
All good fidelity, Titus ii. 10.
  - 4 Entire subjection, Titus ii. 9, 1 Peter, ii. 18. { With all fear, 1 Peter, ii. 18.  
With fear and trembling, Eph. v. 5.  
All honor, 1. Tim. vi. 2.
  - 5 To all kinds of masters, { a { The good and gentle, 1 Peter, ii. 18.  
The believing, 1 Tim. vi. 1.  
b { The perverse, 1 Peter, ii. 18.  
Unbelieving despots, 1 Tim. vi. 1.
  - 6 And to serve a believing master with as much diligence as they would a merciless despot, 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2.
  - 7 To submit to the most grievous of trials. Doing well and suffering for it, 1 Peter, ii. 20.
  - 8 If the severity of their lot tempts them to wrong; the severity is no excuse, Col. iii. 25.
  - 9 But if they obey perfectly (as taught supra, 3, 4, 7, &c.,) *such obedience*
    - 9' Honor's God, 1 Tim. vi. 1, Titus ii. 10, 1 Peter, ii. 19, 20.
    - 9'' Christ accepts it as rendered to himself, Eph. v. 5, 6, Col. iii. 23, 24.
    - 9''' And will reward it accordingly, Eph. vi. 8, Col. iii. 24.

### *From which we Perceive—*

The argument from the New Testament is not merely negative.

The Apostles not only did not keep silence, but spake with unmistakeable clearness.

They declare the master's duty, but nothing of the sinfulness of holding or duty of freeing.

They teach servants, that no severity releases them from the law of perfect obedience, 4, 5, 7, 8, and that obedience to the gospel—by master or servant, or both, interrupts not the *relation* of master and servant.

Hence if Christianity releases not the slave from the *most oppressive yoke* of a *heathen master*, and if it in *no degree* releases him from service to a Christian master (6 supra,) then by the laws of Christianity, SLAVERY IS NOT A SIN.

### SUCH IS THE TESTIMONY FROM SCRIPTURE—TO WHICH ARE SOMETIMES MADE CERTAIN OBJECTIONS.

*Objection I.*—The word “servants” means *hired persons*, not *slaves*.

#### *Answer :*

- 1 The Hebrews had a word עָבֵד to denote the most absolute and abject form of servitude, in the ancient world. Applied to Joseph in Egypt, Ps. cv. 17; used in cursing Canaan, Gen. ix. 25. Translated bond-servant, Lev. xxv. 39, 46.  
This is the word found in the original of all the references to the Old Testament, (except c. 1 and 2, where a Hebrew servant is meant.) The same remarks apply to the references from the New Testament, 1 Peter ii. 18, being only a *partial* exception, and none at all, when the subsequent word, *despot* is considered.
- 2 Now, if the inspired writers meant “*hired laborer*,” why did they say “*absolute slave?*”—when their express object is to *make a distinction*, Lev. xxv. 35, 54, &c. Why, if they mean one thing do they say another?

(a) First.

(b) Second.

(c) Third.

(d) Fourth.

The remarkable courtesy of St. Paul would never call a *hired laborer* a *bond slave*.

A hired laborer would never suppose he was especially designated, when the Apostles begin their exhortations by specifying “*bond slaves*”—nor however applicable the other exhortations might be, would he suppose these exhortations addressed to him, viz : B, b, 5, 6, in connection with 4 and 1.

If “*Bond Slaves*” be not addressed in the exhortations, B, b, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; warnings, 2, 8; encouragements, I, d, & hopes B, b, 9, then the gospel of Christ, whose glory it is, that it is preached to the poor, Matt. xi. 5, while bountifully providing for all mankind besides, entirely overlooks one class of men—takes *no concern*, has *no exhortation*, *no solace*, *no comfort*, *no hope* for the poor bond slave of ancient times.

The rankest abolitionism will revolt at such a conclusion, until it has landed in infidelity—whither alas ! abolitionism always tends.

Hence, if these instructions were designed for mere hired laborers, they lost much of their efficacy by the form in which they were addressed.

*Objection II.*—The Saviour's Golden Rule teaches emancipation as a duty, and therefore the holding of men in slavery to be a sin.  
Matt. vii. 12.

*Answer :*

- (a) First.
- 1 The Golden Rule of our Lord is general, and therefore is susceptible of a false application.
 

E. g.

A judge might be asked, were you to change places with the felon, would you like the sentence of death to be passed upon you ?

A rich man might be asked, were you to change places with yonder vagabond agrarian, would you not wish him to share with you his estate ?
  - 2 Such examples show that the false application of this rule of our Lord, teaches not the doctrine of our Lord. Hence there is a necessity for some correct standard of application, and all must assent to the correctness of the following :
 

T The Scriptures cannot contradict themselves ; any application, which makes them do so, *convicts itself* at once of *falsehood*.

T' A general proposition overthrows not a particular one under it—the particular however, explains the general.

T'' A precept addressed equally to all mankind, cannot in its application, be restricted to any one class.

T. Standard of Interpretation.

The Scriptures, by many express regulations (see *intra*) permit slavery, *which hence is not a sin*.

That particular application of the Golden Rule to slavery, which declares it to be a sin, makes the Scriptures contradict themselves. Such application therefore convicts itself of falsehood, T''.

Again—The rule is equally addressed to all mankind, and hence, (as the Bible recognizes *master and slave*) equally to *master and slave*. The relation being recognized, the rule must be as applicable to the master as to the slave, and to the slave as to the master.

(R)

There must be applications to *both*, which shall harmonize perfectly with the Bible, and with one another, T''.

"S."

The address to the *slave* would be—"Were you a master, would you not wish your servants to be faithful?" This corresponds with the Scripture on the duty of slaves, and is therefore, a correct application.

Abolition allows no such application to the slave, and only unto the master; the following in effect—"Were you a slave, would you not both disobey your master and run away?"

"M."

This application harmonizes not with the one, supra "S," which was seen to be correct, nor with the precepts of Scripture. Hence it is impossible for this application of the Golden Rule to be a just one.

The following however, will be shown to be correct applications of the Golden Rule to Slavery.

"M." *To the Master*.—"Were you a slave, would you not wish your master to be to you just and kind?" Intra B, a, 1.

"S." *To the Slave*.—"Were you a master, would you not wish your slaves to be respectful and faithful?" Intra B, b, 2, 3.

These applications of the Golden Rule fulfill all the rules of its application.—They apply to both master and slave, and not to one to the exclusion of the other, T".

They harmonize perfectly with one another in spirit.

(R) They agree perfectly with the Scripture precepts, from which they were taken, B. a. 1, b. 1, 9.

Wherefore such application of the Golden Rule to Slavery is the *right one*; any application which differs essentially from this therefore, must be false—and lastly, the right application of the "Golden Rule" to Slavery, shows neither Slavery to be a sin—nor emancipation to be a duty.

This objection is logically absurd. Our Saviour says of the Golden Rule :—"This is the law and the prophets," Matt. vii. 12.

(a) Secondly. Now the law and the prophets (I, intra) permit slavery—but if the Golden Rule forbids it, then also the law and the prophets forbid slavery; that is they forbid what they permit—which is absurd.

Some other interpretation of the Golden Rule, therefore is the correct one, which is given, supra, M. S. } The Golden Rule { changes not the relation enforces the correlative duties } of { Master and Slave.

## A COLLOCATION OF PRINCIPAL PASSAGES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, ON THE SUBJECT OF SLAVERY.

There can be no doubt that the authorized English version teaches the correlative duties of master and servant with sufficient clearness. The original however, is even more expressive than the translation. I have written the principal passages from the New Testament, that they might be before the eye at once for convenient reference; and while doing so, I ventured to give a very literal translation of them, the correctness of which I respectfully request may be tested by a comparison with the authorized version, the marginal readings in the same, an examination of Bloomfield, and a critical examination of the Greek Testament.

- 1 Cor. vii. 20 Let each one, in the calling in which he is called, in that remain.  
 21 Art thou called, being, a bond-servant, care not for it, but if thou may'st be made free, *use it rather*.  
 22 For he that is called in the Lord, a bond-servant, is the Lord's *freed-man*. Likewise he that is called free—is the bond-servant of Christ.  
 General. 23 (Ye are bought with a price, be ye not the bond-servants of men.)  
 24 Let each one, brethren, in that, in which he was called, in that remain.

- Eph. vi. 5 Bond-servants, be attentively obedient to your Lords according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in perfect openness of heart, as unto Christ.

- Servants.
- 6 Not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but as the bond-servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the *very* soul ;
  - 7 With good will, as if serving the Lord and not men.
  - 8 Knowing, that whatever good any one doeth, the same shall he receive from the Lord, whether he be a bond-servant or a free man.

- Masters.
- 9 And ye lords, do the same things unto them, moderating a harsh, threatening demeanor, knowing also that your Lord is in Heaven, and respect of persons is not with Him.

- Colos.* iii. 22 Bond-servants, be attentively obedient to your lords, according to the flesh, in everything, not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but in perfect openness of heart, fearing God.

- Servants.
- 23 And what ye do, work from the soul, as unto the Lord, and not unto men ;
  - 24 Knowing, that of the Lord, ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance. For ye serve the Lord Christ.
  - 25 But he that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong that he hath done, and there is no respect of persons.

- Masters.
- iv. 1 *Lords*, show *justice* and *equity* to bond-servants, knowing that ye also have a Lord in Heaven.

- 1 Peter*, ii. 18 Domestics, be subject with all fear, to your own *despots*. Not only to the good and gentle, but also to the perverse.

- Servants.
- 19 For this is acceptable, if through conscience toward God, any one endure grief, suffering wrongfully ; for what renown is it, if sinning and being buffeted, ye take it patiently.
  - 20 But if doing well, and, ye take, be patient, this is acceptable with God.

- 1 Tim.* vi. 1 And let even such bond-servants as are under the *yoke* of oppressive bondage, let even such esteem their own despots worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.

- Servants.
- 2 And they who have believing despots, let them not less regard them, for the reason (*oti*) that they are brethren, but all the more serve them (*oti*) for the reason, that they are believing, beloved, and partakers of the benefit.

Duty of Ministers  
with regard to  
Slavery.

These things teach and exhort.

Inspired prophe-  
cy & description  
of the Modern  
Abolitionist.  
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- 3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness.
- 4 He is a fool, puffed up, though knowing nothing, having a morbid craving for questions and word-fightings—whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, (Greek blasphemies,) evil surmisings.
- 5 Perverse disputings of men debauched in mind and destitute of the truth. From such withdraw thyself.

\* And a historian, even though inspired, could not give a more accurate and perfect description, in every point, than prophecy has given. "From such withdraw thyself." "O my soul, come not into their secret, unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united." From men of this description—O God of Mercy, let it be thy good pleasure, both now, and ever, to deliver me.